Building an Emergency Communications Hub Network

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Communications Academy 2013

What's ahead:

- Why do we prepare and what should we be preparing for?
- How the hubs fit into emergency response.
- What the hubs do… and don't.
- How different Seattle communities started their hub adventures.
- **Questions are welcome any time!**

Why prepare?

- For you
- For your family
- For your neighbors
- For your neighborhood

What are we preparing for?

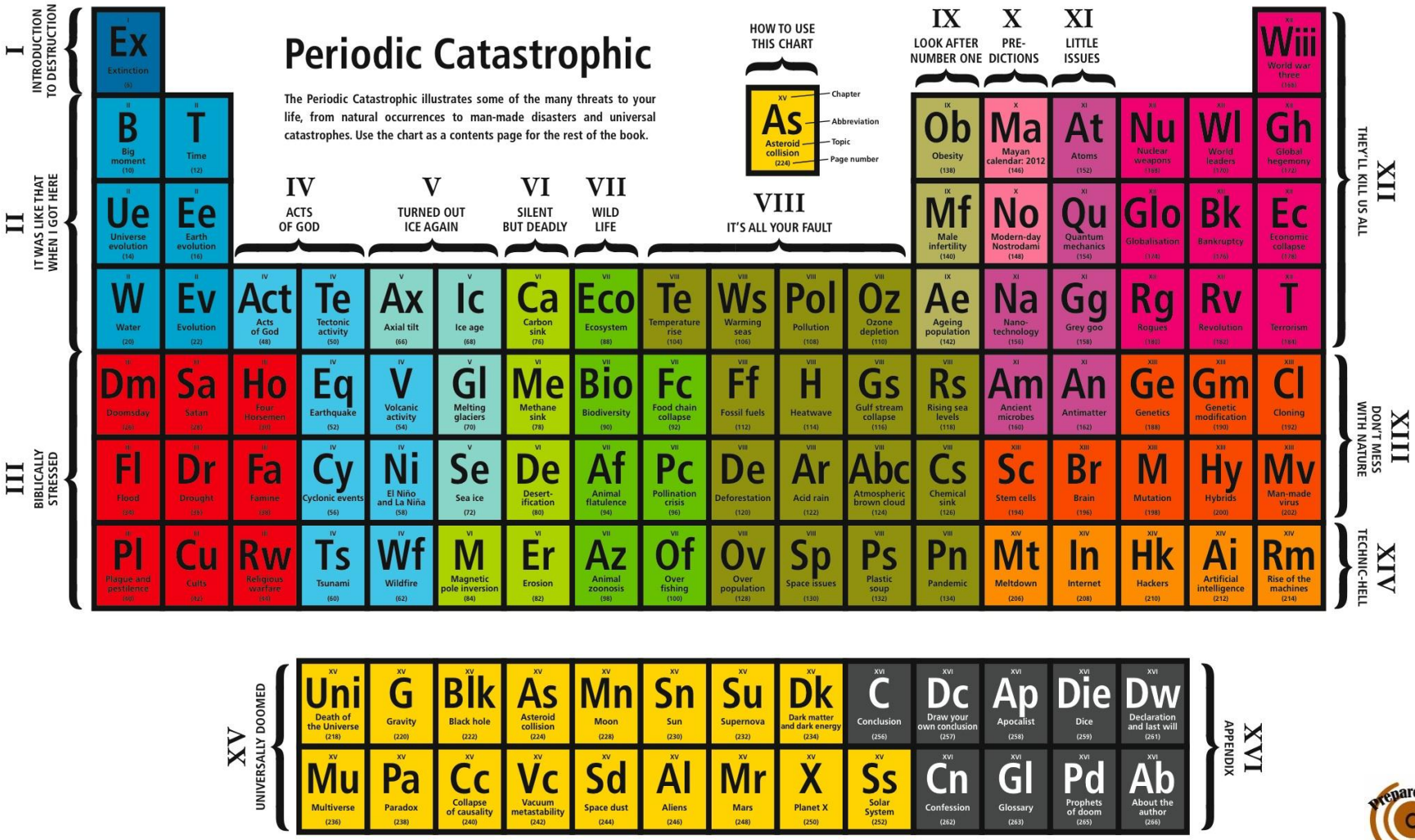
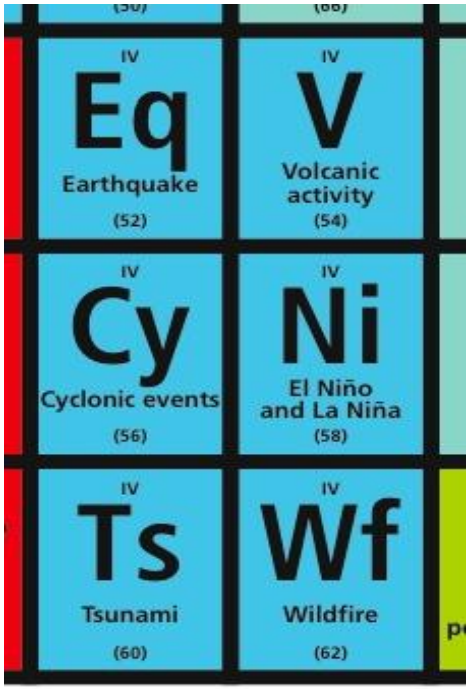


Image from *A is for Armageddon: A Catalogue of Disasters That May Culminate in the End of the World* by Richard Horne

What are we preparing for?

VOLCANO

EARTHQUAKE



THE NAUGHTY CHILDREN

TSUNAMI

WILDFIRE

What's a "disaster"?

- Everyday emergency v. large-scale disaster
- People are resourceful and WILL pull together to survive.
- This has been seen time and time again after major disasters.

During a disaster OPTIONS MATTER!

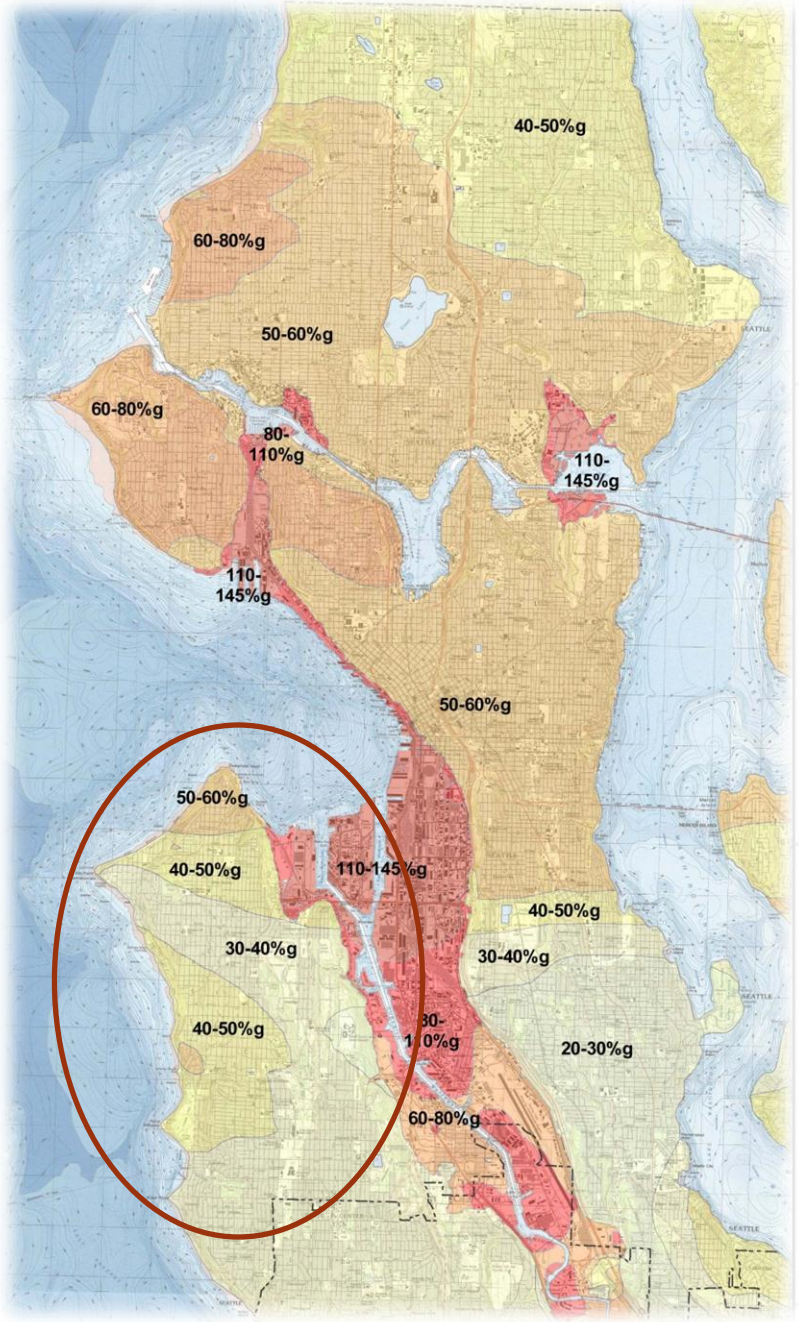
The hub concept

- We see people coming together <u>everyday</u> in smaller communities
  - Tornado alley, the flood plains, hurricane season in Texas and Florida, India blackouts
- What is "usual" in small communities is often completely unheard of in large urban areas

Why don't we make it the norm to build the same kind of community in urban areas?

How it started in Seattle

A long time ago, in a neighborhood not so very far away…



West Seattle's recipe for disaster:

Likelihood of a catastrophic event in the region

+ Geologic base

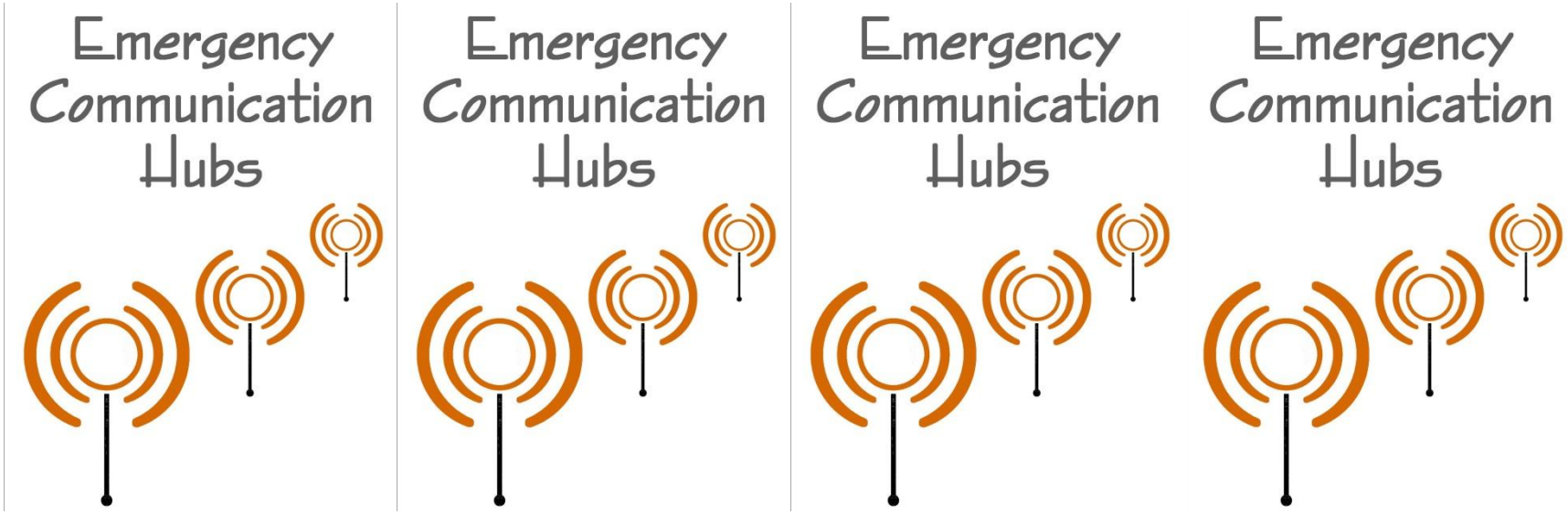
+ Geographic location between the edge of the Seattle fault and the Duwamish Valley

(shake until thoroughly separated)

= The perfect opportunity to be completely isolated from the rest of the city!

But what could they do about it?

- Meet some neighbors
- Learn some skills
- Connect with local businesses
- The Seattle hubs were born!



Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare is the City of Seattle's program to assist residents in their efforts to Get Ready, Get Connected, and Get Strong for any potential emergency.

Learn more: http://www.seattle.gov/emergency/programs/snap/

The Hub Mission:

Prior to a disaster, the hub's responsibility is to aid the City of Seattle in encouraging citizens to be individually and collectively prepared for any disaster.

By prior planning, preparation, and practice, volunteer citizens will have the capability to activate, as soon as possible after a disaster, a network of pre-located neighborhood emergency communications hub sites.

During a disaster, the hub sites will:

1 - Collect information on local situations, needs, and resources.

2 - Relay information between hub sites, and to and from the City of Seattle's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

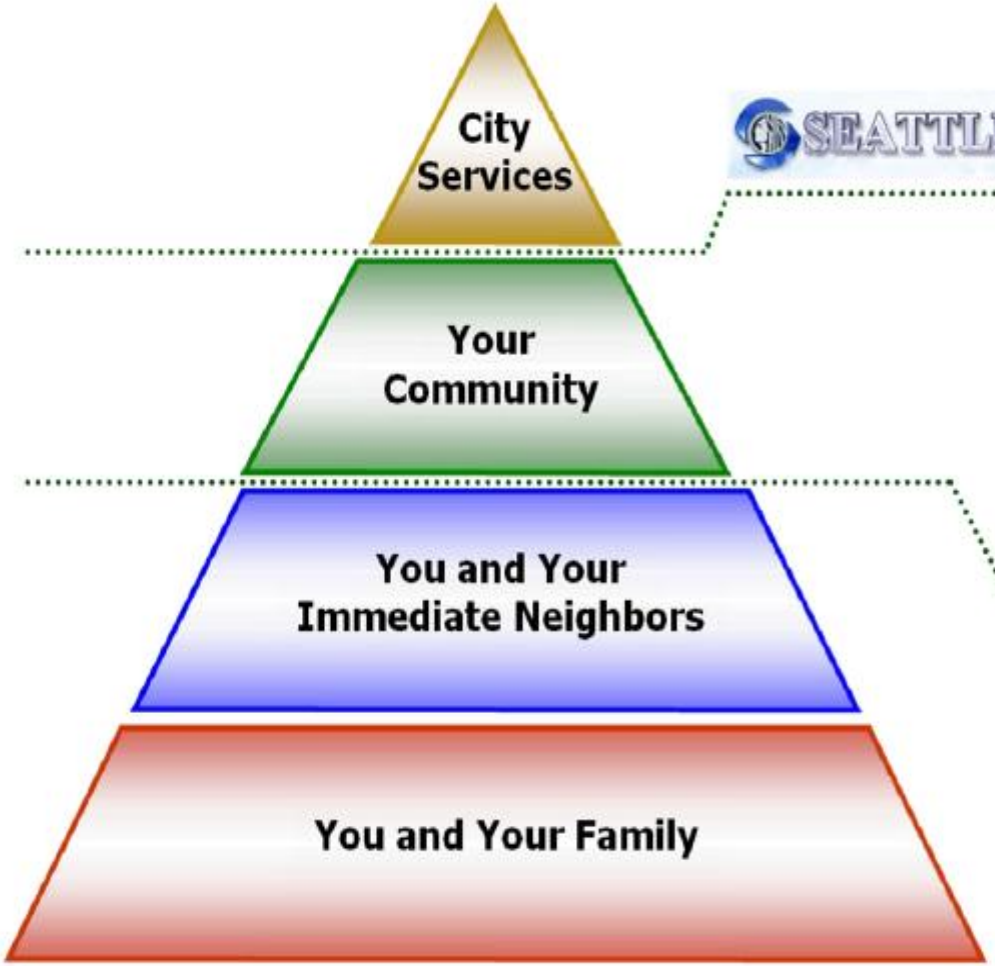
3 - Assist in allocation of resources provided by neighborhood residents to needs of neighborhood residents.

The Hub Mission:

The hub mission is accomplished <u>SOLELY</u> through community volunteers.

- Many hubs have been able to grow because of grants from the city, but the hubs were **not** created by the city.
- The city recognizes the importance of this level of preparedness and works closely with the hubs, but does **not** control how they look or are run.
- **Hubs are built by community members and mentored by other hubs.**

How do hubs fit into emergency response?



SEATTLE.GOV

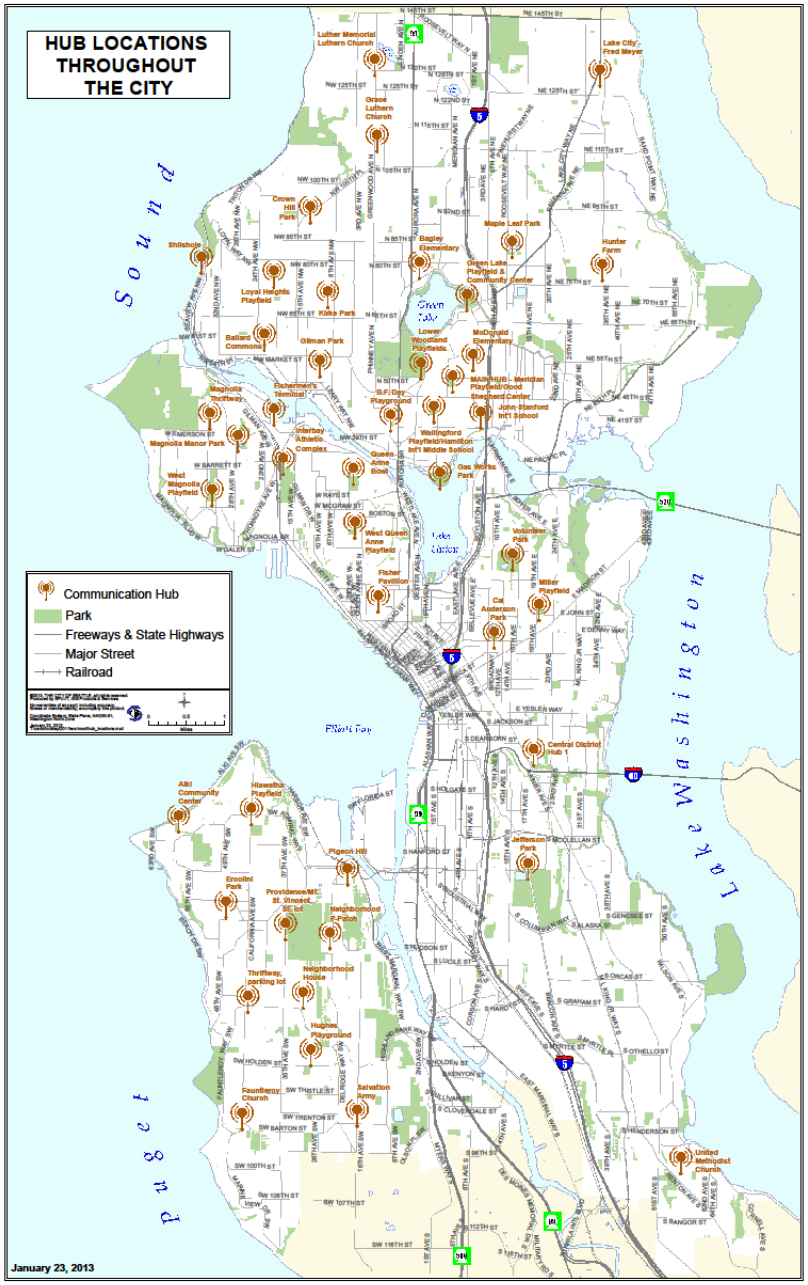
Emergency Communication Hubs

snap
Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare

www.seattle.gov/emergency

Preparedness HUBS

Seattle hubs



What the Seattle hubs do…

A hub is…

- a SAFE community gathering site that activates in the event a major disaster occurs that makes it **impossible to share information in conventional ways**.
- a place for people to **meet and exchange needs, resources, and information** with your neighbors and the city, and help the community respond quickly and effectively.
- an **organic grassroots** concept that includes all community members regardless of skill level.

How the hub functions:

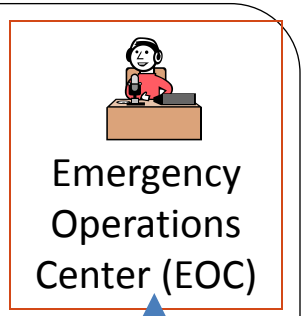
- Nothing at the designated site until activation.
- Volunteers bring supplies and set up shop under an agreement with the site owner.

***** SOLELY RUN THROUGH VOLUNTEER EFFORTS*****

- Gather information and convey it in an organized way.
- The focus is community information sharing, and helping each other help themselves, instead of waiting for other first responders.

HUB site organization and Information Flow

- Assign roles
- Monitor volunteer's welfare
- Adapt to conditions as needed



High Priority Messages

- Transmit and receive radio messages from other hubs and from EOC
- Maintain Radio Message Log

Community Members ("reporters")

- Interview reporters
- Complete message forms

- Review messages
- Compile Situation Reports
- Prioritize messages
- Maintain Message Logs
- Organize Message Boards
- Insure info flows to those who need it

Local Message Boards

- Local Resources
- Local Needs
- Community Information

2-19-2013

How to plan for disaster

- Untrained emergent volunteers
- Too many resources in the wrong places
- It's a disaster!

http://www.npr.org/2013/01/09/168946170/thanks-but-no-thanks-when-post-disaster-donations-overwhelm

Emergent volunteers

Get the right people to the right places

- A key hub focus is training the reliable hub participants to deal with this pool of workers which have constantly shown up in other recent disaster situations
- **EVERYONE** has a resource to offer! How do we tap into that?
  - Have a base of trained volunteers that can deal with training more volunteers

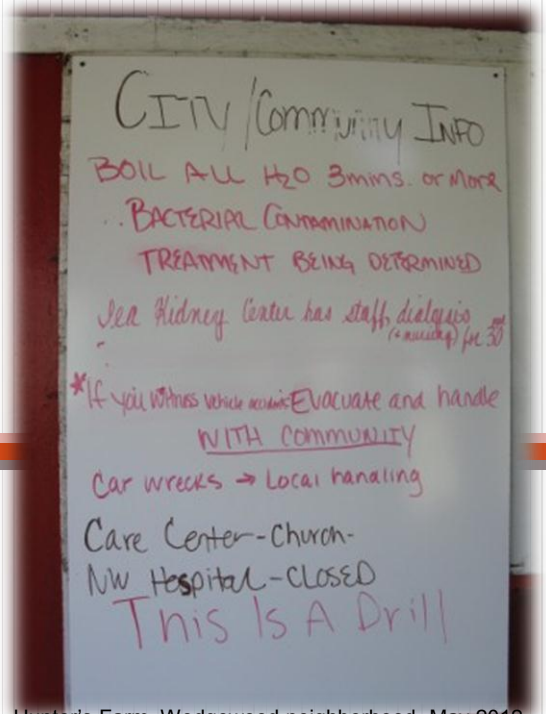
Resource allocation

Get the right resources to the right needs

- Need/Resource Managers
  - The communication boards are focused on getting needs and resources connected
  - A message manager can oversee a good amount of information so that a maximum amount of needs and resources are aligned
- Integrate low-tech (note cards and push pins) with hi-tech (Amazon Wish Lists and facebook groups)
- Information sharing!

Hunter's Farm, Wedgewood neighborhood, May 2012

Information sharing



Hunter's Farm, Wedgewood neighborhood, May 2012

- Message boards
- Local announcements
- tweets and facebook announcements if services available
- Radio voice traffic – ham and GMRS
- Radio digital traffic – fldigi

Volunteer Park, Capitol Hill neighborhood, October 2011

EOC

City Media Releases

Seattle ACS activation, May 2011 drill

Sector Situation Reports

Net Control

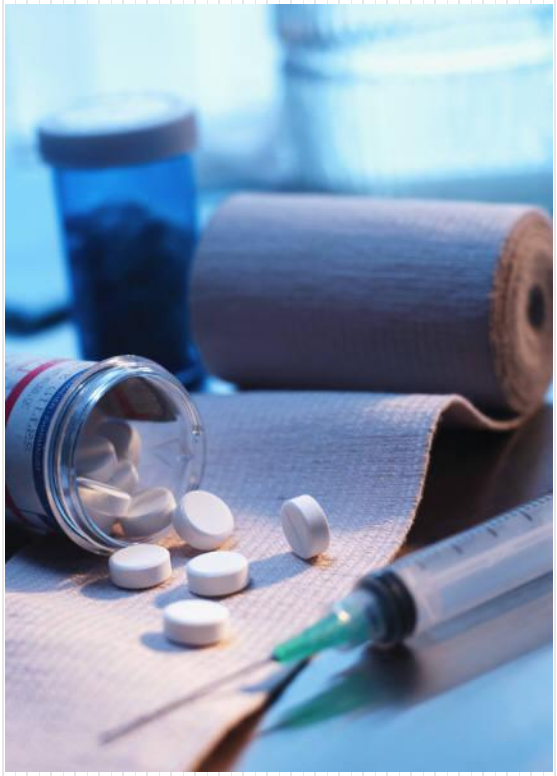
City Media Releases and Sector Sit Reps

Wedgwood, May 2011 drill

Neighborhood Situation Reports

Local Hub site

What the hubs don’t…



A hub is NOT…

- a government agency or sponsored by the city.
- an emergency shelter site.
- a fire/medic station.
- somewhere to expect to find food or supplies.
- based on any Incident Command System (usually).

What does a hub look like?

- Different neighborhoods have different ideas and different needs.
- The success of the Seattle hub program has been largely due to the flexibility of the communities, and the assessment of what their neighborhood wants to do, combined with the support of the city.
- A neighborhood can have 1 hub or 10 hubs. And each hub can be a person on the sidewalk with a laptop and a radio, or a Boy Scout troop with a bunch of tents.

- **Wherever people gather to exchange information is a hub.**

http://westseattle.bepreparedseattle.info

West Seattle Be Prepared

http://westseattle.bepreparedseattle.info

elcome! | Overview of our Website | What's New | About the Hubs | Medical & First Aid | Resources | Learn More | Contact Us | Site Map

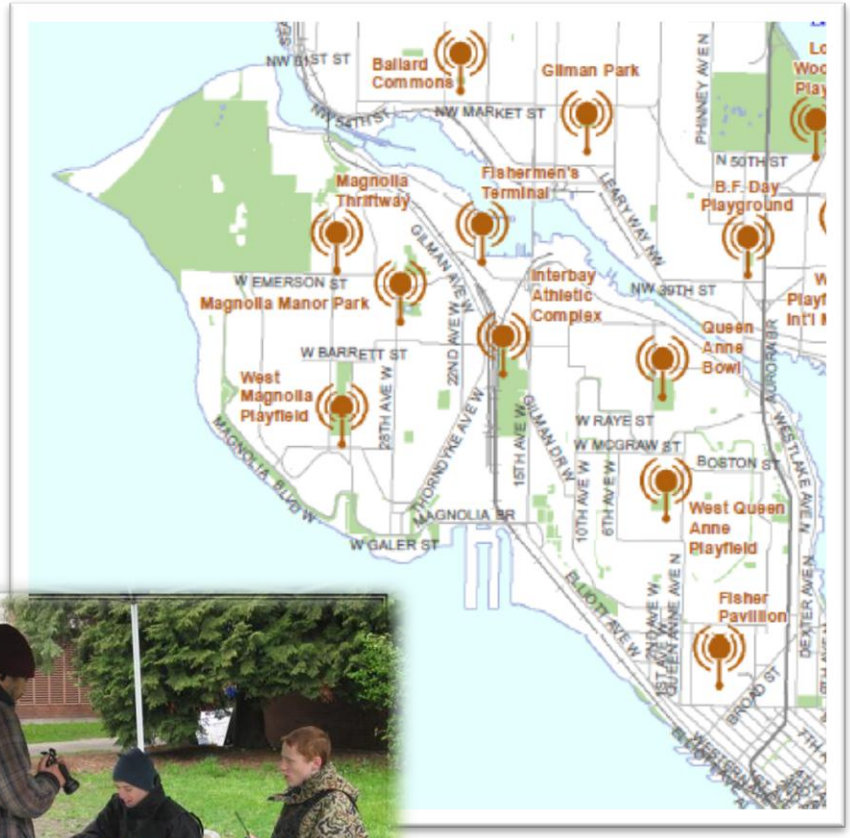
West Seattle cont.

- 11 designated sites
- Mix of parks, community centers, churches, and parking lots
- Built business partnerships by asking for emergency pledges
- Developed the current relationship that exists between the hubs and the Office of Emergency Management

Magnolia Queen Anne District

Disaster Response Plan

The Plan | Get Prepared | When a Disaster | Contact Us | Volunteer Form | Report a Problem | Maps | Hazards | Links | EPC & Partners



Preparedness HUBS

MIQA cont.

- 8 designated sites
- Actively involved with the Boy Scouts
- Experience for youth to prepare, organize events, and teach classes while earning badges

www.SustainableWallingford.us

learning to live on one planet with grace and joy

Main | My Page | Members | Photos | Events | Groups | Forum | Blogs | Videos | Donate

All Groups My Groups

Community Preparedness

Created by Mary Heim

View Groups

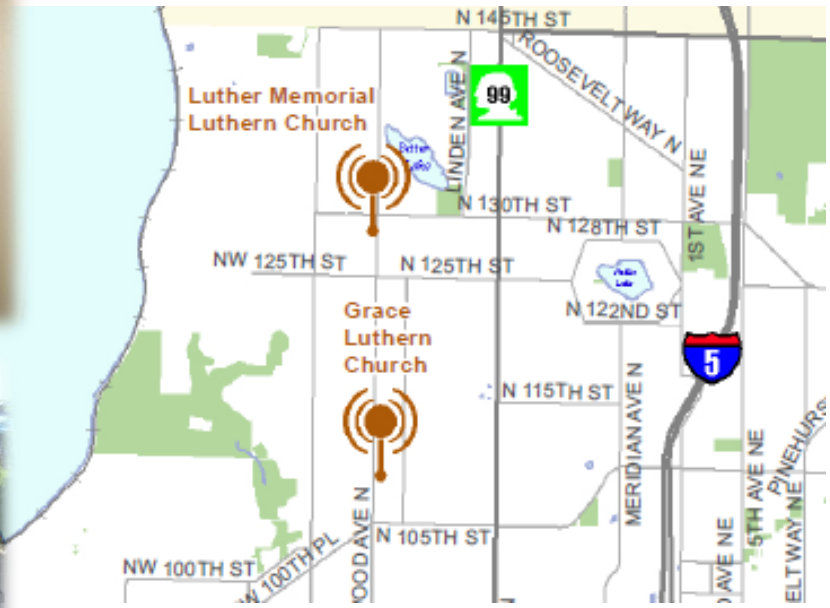
Wallingford/North Central cont.

- 7 designated sites
- Strength in partnership with Sustainable Wallingford
- A regular presence at neighborhood meetings and events like Seattle Tilth, local farmer's markets, and visits at the senior center (not just preparedness!) keep the neighborhood engaged

BROADVIEW PREPARES

WHAT IF WE HAD A DISASTER AND NOBODY CAME TO HELP?

Home | Prepare Your Household | Prepare With Neighbors | Emergency Communication Hubs | Resources & Links | Join Us



Broadview cont.

- 2 designated sites
- Organized with faith-based groups
- Active in door-to-door recruitment to organize the neighborhood

Home | About the WCC | Get Involved | Community Links | Newsletter

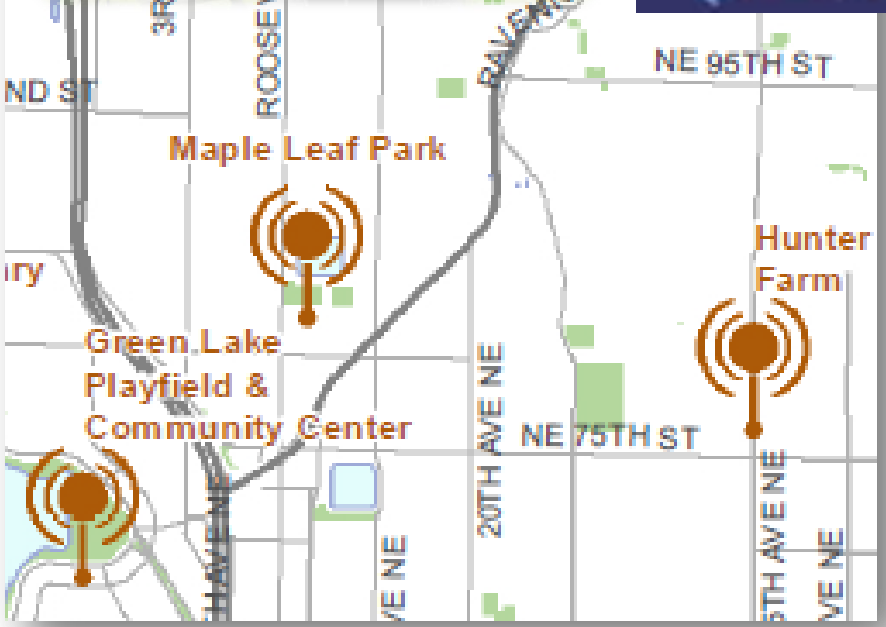
enter search text here

Wedgwood Community Council
in northeast Seattle, WA

Land Use | Parks | Events | Block Watch | Hunter Farm | History

Maple Leaf Community Council

A Transition Initiative
SUSTAINABLE NE Seattle
LAURELHURST • BRYANT • WEDGWOOD • VIEWRIDGE • MEADOWBROOK • HAWTHORNE HILLS
Connecting for a sustainable community



Northeast cont.

- 2 established sites with more in progress
- Strong focus on ICS and existing organized systems
- Partnered with other community preparedness groups
- Strong VIP visibility to promote hub message and build momentum in neighborhood participation

CHiP

capitol hill prepares

HOME

ABOUT

CONTACT US!

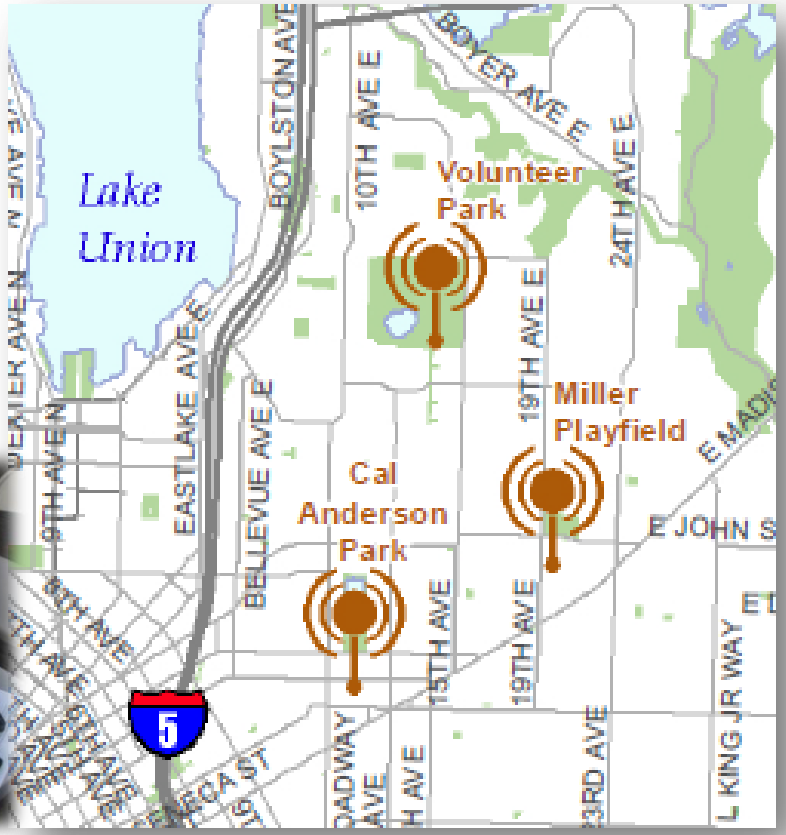
RECENT POSTS

- Why prepare? Read this!

Why prepare? Read this! And then come to our training!

CHIP TWEETS

- Hub roles training tonight at Miller Community Center! 7pm #prepared



Capitol Hill cont.

- 3 designated sites
- Hubs funded through Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Small and Simple Grant
- Strong amateur radio presence has given the hubs more flexibility and range
- Transitory locals, so focusing on how to use emergent volunteers

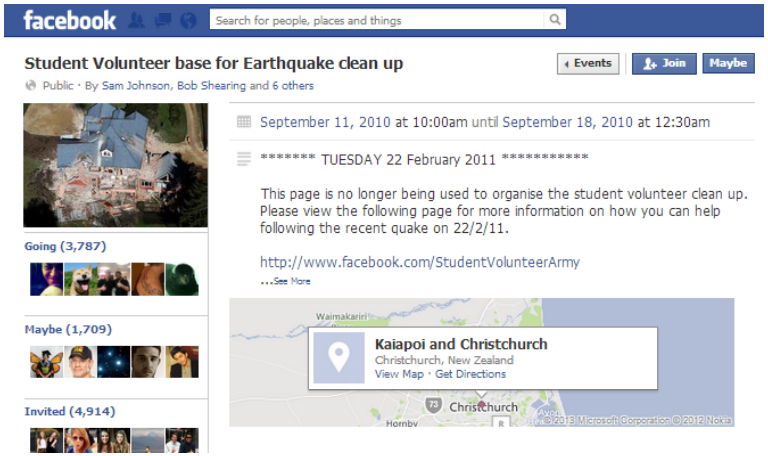
Hubs around the world

Where have hubs activated?

- NYC post-Sandy
  - Occupy Sandy
    - An established group that is focused on building community self-reliance
  - Used non-conventional means to get resources and needs aligned
    - Amazon Wish Lists and other local business registries
    - Heavily supported by social media

Where have hubs activated?

- Christchurch
  - Faith-based groups organized resources
    - Church buildings were available and became natural gathering places
  - People who weren't able to volunteer with Civil Defense found there own ways to organize
    - Students who didn't have "skills" used what they knew to develop new relationships and skip the bureaucracy



"At registration time each morning, volunteers would scan their student ID or driver's license, rather than signing in with pen and paper. We dispatched and relocated them via text message through mobile management software (www.geoop.com) as the operation grew. The tools in our pockets – cell phones, Google maps, Facebook, Twitter and everything in between – were the key to our success."

Where have hubs activated?

- Christchurch continued
  - Community partnerships
    - Existing networks
    - But overwhelmingly, new ties were made
  - More than ever, current technology and social media provided the tools to organize and create new communities

Community Resilience: case studies from the Canterbury earthquakes, from the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management

So what would it look like in your neighborhood?

- Who lives in your neighborhood?
- What groups and organizations are you involved with and do they have a preparedness plan?
  - Faith based
  - Interest based
  - Kids in school
- What skills and expertise will you offer to the groups, and how will you engage them?

How do I start my own hub?

- Meet your neighbors and organize!
- Find a natural gathering place in your neighborhood.
- Train, train, train!

Final thoughts

- We are in an age of excess information
- People are more knowledgeable about events and effects, and can learn skills on their own
- More and more people are following the DIY philosophy
- City's and State's understand that they can't take care of everyone and that community's need to be self-reliant
- **The hub program is just another tool, it doesn't replace formal training or established organizations**

Additional Information - Websites

- Neighborhood hub websites/blogs
  - Capitol Hill Prepares – http://caphillprepares.wordpress.com/
    - Jessica Coleman jsroder@gmail.com
  - MIQA Community Council - http://epc-mqadc.com/
  - Broadview Prepares - http://broadviewprepares.org/
  - CH16EB700 - http://www.ch16eb700.org/
  - Wedgwood/Maple Leaf - http://sustainableneseattle.ning.com/group/emergencyprepare
  - West Seattle Be Prepared - http://westseattlebeprepared.org

- City of Seattle Office of Emergency Management
  - http://www.seattle.gov/emergency/prepare/neighborhood

- Sandy recovery
  - http://interoccupy.net/occupysandy/
  - http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/11/02/1154537/-AMAZING-Occupy-Wall-Street-Leading-Massive-Volunteer-Powered-Recovery-Efforts-in-New-York
  - https://lowereastside.recovers.org/

Additional Information - Videos

- Hub Training workshop – 5 roles presented in a training format, each class runs from 20 to 30 minutes created by the Wallingford hub participants, 2012
  - http://vimeo.com/readyseattle

- Alexander Beaumont 2012 Red Cross award for his work in the Queen Anne Hubs (3 minutes)
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDTzHYHNb5M&feature=youtu.be

- Winds of Winter Drill, October 2011 – ACS activation at the Seattle EOC (4 minutes)
  - http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=Z3MVrkjl0FE

- West Seattle Be Prepared - Hubs and social networking, KING5 Feb 27, 2011 (3 minutes)
  - http://www.king5.com/news/quake/Nisqually-QuakeSocial-Networking-117012478.html

- SNAP and CHiP on Seattle TV "City Stream", 2010 (starts at 9:40. 5:30 min)
  - http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=3071012